

Dear FCC,

As a deaf VRS user, I am responding to your request for comments on CG 03-123; FCC 06-57, which refers to the idea of creating a system that would allow VRS users to contact one another in a functionally equivalent manner to hearing people contacting one another via a telephone number. As we now know, VRS is a phenomenal telecommunications service that, from a performance perspective, is truly functionally equivalent. However, I don't think anyone disputes that, from a practical standpoint, the current dialing/contact methodologies fall far short of functional equivalence.

In order to make VRS truly functionally equivalent from a practical standpoint, it is necessary to set up a system to make VRS user-friendly, especially for hearing consumers. Unfortunately, the case today is that far more calls are made by deaf VRS users than are made by hearing VRS users. The reasons are pretty simple: Hearing people are required to keep track of multiple VRS provider phone numbers, along with an IP address that will not always work. My hearing mother gets confused by all this and I frequently have to call her to help her figure out how to contact me. As a result, she has not attempted to contact me on a regular basis because it can be frustrating for her. I'm sure she's not the only one.

The last thing deaf VRS users need or should be required to do is to ask (and even beg) hearing people to try to make VRS calls when it's already confusing in the first place. Because of these experiences, I don't even bother leaving VRS phone numbers and IP addresses on hearing peoples' voice mails because they will not understand how it works. I just have to hope I can call back and get them when they are available to answer the phone, or I have to leave an email address and explain I don't have a convenient telephone number available.

I applaud the FCC for bringing VRS to the forefront as a functionally equivalent technology as far as call performance goes. I encourage the FCC to make VRS fully functionally equivalent in every sense of the term by making it just as easy for hearing and deaf VRS users to contact other deaf VRS users as it already is for hearing people to contact other hearing users.